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The Musket

LEXINGTON HIGH SCHOOL'S STUDENT-RUN NEWSPAPER SINCE 1969

Bon appétit!
Très Petit Crêperie is bringing crêpes and French cuisine to Lexington Center, starting in early 2016.
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Cheerleader appreciation
Policy changes encourage Lexington High School cheerleaders and football players to appreciate each other.
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Volume LIV Issue III—December 2015

Lexington High School remembers Paris through peace exhibit

■ Niha Putta
Maria Santillana Linares
Staff Writers

At the end of the hall on the first floor of the Foreign Language Building, a bulletin board is adorned by colorful symbols of peace for Paris. In the middle of the board is a short poem, penned by French teacher Rina Farber-Mazor, that urges not only peace for Paris, but also "peace for humanity."

Farber-Mazor prompted the creation of the peace exhibit in the Foreign Language Building recently after the terror attacks that took place in Paris on Nov. 13.

"The goal of this peace exhibit is to allow students to express their pain and their wishes for a better world in response to the attacks in Paris and suffering in LHS," Farber-Mazor said.

Farber-Mazor said the idea for making the peace exhibit came from her work with the Social Justice on Campus club at school and from her responsibility as an educator.

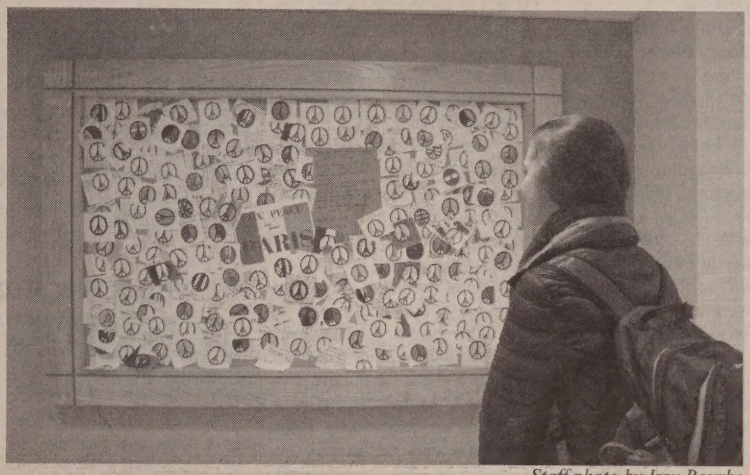
"When the attacks in Paris happened, my first thought was to check for the safety of my friends and family, but very quickly I had the realization that all educators have after times of crisis: you get very little time to process for yourself before you have to figure out how to process with your students," Farber-Mazor said.

Julian Berliner, an LHS junior at LHS, said he considers Paris to be his home. Many of his family members live in France, and he said he was in shock after the recent tragedies.

"[The exhibit] is a kind gesture. The peace act shows recognition and for me that's comforting," Berliner said.

Although the exhibit is finished, students can drop by Room 615 to decorate peace signs that will be sent to LHS' French Exchange sister school, Lycée Descartes in Antony, France.

"We have already sent them photographs [of the exhibit] which have been shared with their students and faculty," Farber-Mazor said.



Staff photo by Izzy Rourke

Farber-Mazor's peace exhibit can be on the first floor of the Foreign Language Building.

Gabi Kussmaul, a senior in Farber-Mazor's AP French class, said she was shocked when she heard about the attacks in Paris. For Kussmaul, the peace exhibit remains mostly as a reminder that she is fortunate that all the people she knew were okay.

"[It is a] hopeful reminder for peace in the world," Kussmaul said.

Farber-Mazor found that the French department has received positive feedback from students and other teachers. She said students were especially grateful for the opportunity to express themselves in the exhibit.

"That's why I think it's so important that FM had her classes discuss it, not just because it happened in France and we're [in a] French [class] but because when something like that happens, we need to talk about it," Kussmaul said.

YoDots, toaster, ketchup and compostable trays new to LHS cafeteria

■ Ryan Leung
Columns Editor

Dippin' Dots, a new toaster and compostable trays are among new changes being put into place at the Lexington High School cafeteria.

These changes are part of an ongoing process of trying to add "the wow factor" into school lunches.

"We're just trying to always say, what else can we do differently?" Kevin Silvia, food service director at LHS, said.

One of the new additions to school lunches has been the YoDots, little dots of frozen yogurt.

YoDots, a healthier version of Dippin' Dots, are a popular addition to the selection of snacks in the cafeteria.

Staff photo by Attiya Nurse

"We were looking for some healthy option we could give [to students] ...We tried [the Dippin' Dots] out, we tasted them, we were like, 'yep'," Silvia said. Since their arrival, the Dippin' Dots have proven to be very popular.

"The Dippin' Dots are one of my favorite … they're a great addition to the school cafeteria," Avani Kabra, a freshman, said.

Another freshman, Elias Benghiat, said, "[The Dippin' Dots] are a great attempt to make our lunches healthier and tastier."

In response to the popularity of the deli station last year, Silvia has also added a new deli in both Commons I and Commons II.

"The lines are still pretty long, but it's a step in the right direction," sophomore Anika Mehra said.

Another change to the cafeteria has been the implementation of Heinz ketchup.

"We made a change to Heinz [because] we weren't using all natural ketchup. Heinz is not completely natural with the corn syrup … We're looking at different brands right now, because we're trying to give [students] all-natural ketchup," Silvia said.

With this spirit of innovation, Silvia sees more alterations coming to the cafeteria.

"We're looking to do some type of omelette bar in the morning, maybe once a week, when people can get an omelette made, then go to class. Something quick," Silvia said.

Many students are already excited for this new change.

"It's an awesome idea," Raghav Gupta, a junior, said.

Other students are in support of additional cafeteria changes as well.

"The omelette bar idea sounds good, especially for the people who don't have time to eat breakfast at home," Ashley Chen, a sophomore, said.

In the future, students can expect even more changes to the cafeteria. "We are constantly looking for different ways to be innovative," Silvia said. "When people eat [our lunches], we want them to go, 'you know what, we've got the best school lunch.'"

Editorial

Listen to your Republican friends: Why diverse political opinions deserve a voice at LHS and beyond

Recently, an editor mused about whether the government should be allowed to mandate that all of its citizens receive health insurance. The response to this musing was swift and immediate. Eyebrows were raised. Eyes glazed. Government intervention was the solution to the healthcare crisis—wasn't it obvious?

Lexington High School is a pretty liberal place. In the epitome of suburbia, students tend to share views when it comes to controversial issues.

However, when such a large percentage of students are in agreement, opinions begin to take on labels of "right" and "wrong." Assertions are just taken at face value, and ideas such as the importance of government intervention are seen as indisputable.

This, however, is problematic. When we start to turn assumptions into axioms, we lose the ability to engage with different opinions. Discussions screech to a halt, and we settle for the bare minimum, agreeing to have irreconcilable differences.

Worse still, we may never settle, choosing to forever ignore those with whom we disagree. We criticize those whose opinions differ from ours, immediately leaping to drastic conclusions, calling them "conservative", "illogical" and maybe even downright "dumb". We proudly stand by our powered, open and seemingly "right" beliefs, not even realizing when our argumentation turns into muffled bullying.

Instead, we should take the time to actually listen to others' perspectives. We should try to understand where opposing opinions come from, and when we present our own viewpoints, we should clarify specific points of agreement and difference.

This type of argumentation can go a long way towards creating a culture of empathy and understanding. Perhaps, political discussions could bring us closer together instead of rupturing friendships and activating tear ducts.

This goes beyond the ever-expanding buildings of LHS. Such a change in culture is vital in a world where governments are plagued by polarization and inefficiency because of their constituents' basic inability to understand and empathize with people of different political leanings.

As the Presidential Election draws near, taking the time to engage with other opinions could pave the way for an active, engaged and deliberate future citizenry.

Unsigned editorials reflect the opinion of the majority of the editorial board.

Point of View: Does Santa belong in our malls?

Yes, Santa Claus is for everyone

■ Avery Gehring
Staff Writer

In the past decade, companies have strived to become more politically correct, and the holidays are no exception. For instance, companies and schools have switched from "Christmas" to "holiday" parties and various LHS clubs have begun calling their gift-swapping game "Secret Snowflake" rather than "Secret Santa".

Many worry that the practice of having Santa Claus in the mall to take pictures with during the holiday season is exclusionary to non-Christian religions. Although many families do not take pictures with Santa, those families are necessarily excluded. Removing Santa from malls would mean that many families would not be able to celebrate an American tradition.

Christmas has become an American holiday. According to a poll conducted last year by Pew Research, "nine-in-ten Americans say they celebrate Christmas." This number represents not only the Christian community but also people of a variety of beliefs. In fact, the study also found that 80 percent of non-Christians celebrate the holiday. Many reported that they felt Christmas was a cultural, instead of religious, holiday. Clearly, a majority of Americans are not offended by having Santa in malls and appreciate and embrace the tradition.

Furthermore, removing the traditional mall Santa runs the risk of insulting more people. Years of family photos would be disrupted and backlash would likely result. Take the Starbucks controversy for example: even a simple lack of Christmas decoration on the company's coffee cups upset many Americans and led to a boycott movement.

At the end of the day, no one is forced to take pictures with Santa. To rid everyone of this opportunity would be too extreme. After all, Christmas has become an American holiday. While it is important to avoid offending those who don't celebrate Christmas, it's also critical to allow the majority who do celebrate Christmas to openly honor their traditions.

No, winter traditons should be non-exclusionary

■ Alexa Christ
Staff Writer

It's that time of the year again: kids and their parents rush to the mall to sit on Santa's lap to get those perfect Christmas card snapshots. But along with the holidays comes controversy regarding everyone's favorite Christmas icon, Santa Claus.

Santa in malls has become a Christmas tradition across America. However, various companies and stores are trying to include other religions when it comes to the winter holidays in an attempt to increase diversity and show tolerance. Along with a changing America should come a change of old-fashioned traditions.

Having Santa Claus in the malls excludes non-Christian religions. Though other religions have different holidays all throughout the year, none of them are celebrated in malls to the same scale as Christmas. Giving Christmas this special status implies that Christianity is more important than other religions.

Christmas may only be widely accepted because of the social pressures to conform to Christian beliefs, and Santa's presence in malls only exemplifies that. Non-Christian children may feel the pressure to celebrate Christmas just to fit in with their friends who visit Santa Claus in the mall and are promised gifts in return.

The presence of Santa in malls brings joy and cheer to those who enjoy it, but also excludes other groups. Celebrating Christmas in malls is a tradition that isn't keeping up with the diverse and ever-changing America. For a country that prides itself in being open to other cultures and religions, a change needs to occur in order for the winter season to be truly holly and jolly for all.

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collegebored

College decisions should not define our lives—here are 5 ways to overcome the stress of waiting

Becca Xu
Columnist

My name is Becca Xu, I am a senior at LHS and this fall I applied to college. Something I'm just noticing is how eerily similar this phrase is to the introduction people usually give at a support program. Maybe you've heard of it: the first word of its name begins with an A and the second word is Anonymous.

By the time you're reading this, most of us should have heard back already about early applications, but for those that are also submitting regular decision applications, this game of waiting could extend all the way until March. In fact, we should start a support group too, since I know I'm not the only one who is anxiously awaiting the results of this first round of decisions. We could call ourselves the "This-letter-determines-my-future-and-that's-a lot-of-weight-for-a-tiny-letter-and-I-am-freaking-out-about-it Anonymous." Of course, we would go by the acronym TLDMFATAOWFATLAIAFOAIA (The name is still a work in progress).

Honestly, this uncertainty is the worst part. It's like you are suspended in a sort of admissions limbo, waiting for some higher power (the admissions officers) to decide if you're going "upstairs or downstairs." These admissions officers are evaluating your life, your accomplishments, your failures, and you as a person. Complete strangers are making conclusions about what kind of person you are from a few SAT scores and a 650 word essay in order to place you into life-changing categories: yes, no, and maybe. Doesn't that sound bogus to you?

Why do we give them so much power? I know they have the literal power of deciding our future (and that's a whole 'nother can of worms), but why do we give them the power to make us feel so anxious and self-doubtful? Every single person I have talked to applied early said that they were feeling some kind of stress about it. Add that onto the stress seniors are feeling about finishing the rest of their applications, keeping up first semester grades, figuring out what they want to be when the grow up and just being an LHS student in general, and that's when you get walking nervous-breakdowns-waiting-to-happen.

I say no. I say we choose to actively fight this stress over decisions. There are so many better uses of our time than agonizing over every comma and period of an application that is already turned in and can't be changed anyway. So, to end on a more positive note, here is my list of Five Uses of Your Time that are More Productive and Beneficial To You than Stressing:

1. GO OUTSIDE. Take a hike. No, seriously, go on a hike before the snow comes and the temperatures become unbearably cold. Go into Boston and explore. Grab and friend and make them sit in your backyard for a picnic/tea party. Take advantage of the fact that we live in this beautiful corner of the world called New England.

2. READ A BOOK. I could be a picture book, a comic, book, Tolstoy's "War and Peace" (you overachiever, you), or a bathroom book ("The Great American Bathroom Book" is on sale on Amazon right now!). In fact, it could be a magazine. You don't even need to learn anything by reading — I know, shocker! No need to analyze passages and write a five-page essay after: I'm prescribing a book that is purely for entertainment.

3. TALK TO SOMEONE. Go be social. Spend time with your friends, I know it's hard when everyone's lives are ridiculously busy, but friend-time is always a good time. Talk to your parents. As much as they spent the last two decades convincing you of the opposite, they love you. Plus, you'll probably end up missing them just a little, wherever you end up next year.

4. WRITE THANK YOU NOTES. There is evidence that when you feel gratitude towards someone else, you actually end up happier than before you felt it (thanks AP psych!). As cheesy as those turkey thank you notes we wrote in homeroom were, they were actually on to something.

5. And last but not least, DO SOMETHING YOU LIKE. Make sure you carve out some time in your hectic life to do something you enjoy doing. If your favorite thing in the world is tag, then get a group of friends together and go to a park one day! We often forget to take time for ourselves, so here is your reminder. Treat yo' self.

Peace and Love,
Becca

A day in the life of a METCO student: Austin Fowlkes

Sukanya Walhekar
Staff Writer

"My first alarm rings at 4:50 a.m., followed by many others. When I'm finally up, I get up, get ready, and leave by 5:50 a.m."

Austin Fowlkes, Lexington High School junior, and his twin brother, Anthony, leave before their mother is even awake. They make the 15 to 20 minute walk to their bus stop in Dorchester and then the bus takes them to school an hour away.

Fowlkes, just like other METCO students, has been making this journey since first grade. He attended Hastings Elementary School, then Diamond Middle School and now LHS. His bus takes around an hour to reach school, during which he sleeps or completes leftover homework.

Fowlkes said that his school day is much like anyone else's, but that he "gets a study with a METCO academic support teacher for help with anything" if necessary.

He stressed one thing about METCO students: camaraderie, and a sense of brotherhood among them.

"It's like immigrants moving to a new country or city. They make their own enclave and stick together and thrive. Weird comparison, but that's how I see it. Of course we have Lexington friends, but there's a common understanding between us, being from the city and all," Fowlkes said.

When asked what he wished more LHS students knew about the METCO kids, Fowlkes acknowledged the stereotypes about METCO kids, and said "don't think we're all ... dumb. There's a lot of smart kids among us."

Fowlkes is now in his third year of German and with the help of Heidemarie Floerke, the sole German teacher at LHS, he won the Szombathy-Toth Scholarship last spring. This prestigious language scholarship is awarded to one minority student in the United States each year. Recipients travel to Germany and participate in a three week summer study program in which they tour the country, stay with a host family and attend a German school.

Fowlkes said he "learned more in those three weeks than he has in all his years of schooling." He also said it was "hugely relaxing to be off the soil that produced [his] primary source of stress."

"When we were discussing the German Exchange in class, Austin approached me and expressed that he would have loved to have gone on the trip, but that his family couldn't afford it," Floerke said.

"When the Szombathy-Toth scholarship showed up on the American Association of Teachers of German, I immediately thought of [Fowlkes]. He worked hard, wrote essays and managed to win it for himself, I was immensely happy," Floerke said.

Austin wrote "The Common Understanding," a poem about what it's like to be an African American kid in the suburbs, for a sophomore poetry project last year. The project, 'Where We Are, Poems from the Sophomore Class of 2017' is a compilation of these poems online. The organizer of the project, Anthony Tedesco, picked Austin's title from the hundreds and named the published poetry book after the title of the poem.

Fowlkes said he had always wanted to be a pilot and join the Air Force. However, after visiting Germany, he is strongly considering studying abroad there, since the universities are excellent and virtually free.

Fowlkes ends with this. "You know ... you're not gonna get to please everyone. That's how it is in life ... In the same way, the poem I wrote about us black kids in the city having struggles, doesn't mean that anyone else's struggles aren't relevant .. We all experience loss and pain, but do one thing in life and you'll be fine: look around you, and realize that you're not the only one."

Excerpt from "The Common Understanding" by Austin Fowlkes

Austin?
Why do you look so mad?
This is the face of the common people.
This is the best mask to wear in the world of free-for-all and uncertainty.

Why do you look like you killed someone?
Because I look like the common people.
Step in my shoes; we'll look the same.

What's wrong with you?
I'm part of the common people.
I'm one of the expendable.
One of the millions who has armies against them.
One of the millions who'll fade off into the crowd before I fade from existence.

Cara Bean's holiday: Lexington High School art teacher returns from year-long cartoonists' workshop

■ William Zen
Shayari Peiris
Staff Writers

In order to become a more focused and informed artist and art teacher, Cara Bean took a sabbatical during the 2014 - 2015 school year to attend the Sequential Artists Workshop (SAW) in Gainesville, Florida.

SAW, founded by Tom Hart and his wife, Leela Corman, "is essentially a group of cartoonists who didn't see in colleges ... what they wanted to learn as cartoonists," Bean said. As of now, SAW has four regular faculty members and a host of visiting visual artists who give workshops.

After teaching art at Lexigton High School for nine years, Bean decided to take unpaid leave. She said she knew that she wanted to study comics because she had already studied painting and drawing in graduate school, and working with her students at LHS fostered her interest in comics.

Bean applied to the school by sending her portfolio, an essay and some comics that she had created.

"[At SAW,] I was able to write and illustrate comics every day and enjoy warm weather ... while studying the history of narrative art and traditional drawing methods," Bean said.

A ccording to Bean, a typical day at SAW would consist of time for breakfast and a bike ride to school, with possible lizard sightings on the way.

She said there were one or two classes every day on subjects such as "writing...drawing...comics history ... and sometimes figure drawing." But most of the day was spent working on comics, which take "hours of work" to create, Bean said.

Creating comics involves "writing the story, and then you're drawing all of the thumbnails, and then you're drawing the final drawings, and then you're inking all of that and it just takes so long. And then someone reads it and they flip through it in 10 minutes and they're like, 'That was really good. When's your next story come out?' And you're like 'It's three months!'" Bean said.

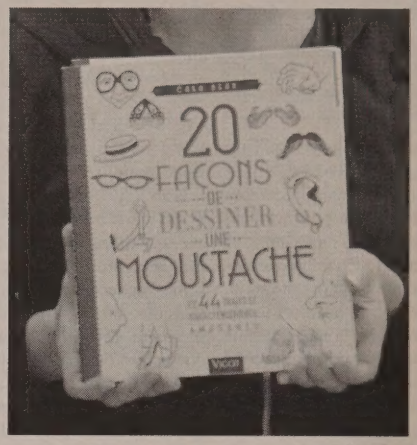
Bean's colleagues expressed enthuasism when asked about her experience.

"It was incredibly exciting to see the work [Bean] created and to hear about her experiences as a student in the art studio. I really admire her commitment to her craft and her love of learning," Alethea Roy, the K-12 coordinator of the Visual Arts Department, wrote in an email.

Through her time at SAW, Bean has become a "much better resource" as she now has an understanding of the "history of comics ... techniques ... and artists," Roy said.

Bean said that her experience at SAW has made her a better resource in the classroom as well as an improved teacher overall. Since she came back to teaching with a fresh perspective, she saw past mistakes.

"It's like reading an essay you wrote the night before and then you read it the next morning and you're like, 'What is that sentence?' or 'What is that word?'... I think any teacher, forget about the cartooning, [should] just go away, be a parent for a year, go away, travel for a year, you came back, you'd see with clarity what your job really is, or better," Bean said.



Staff photo by Anar Kansara
Bean holds her recently published book, "20 Ways to Draw a Mustache and 44 Other Funny Faces and Features".

Though her time at SAW was very productive and beneficial to her creativity and teaching, Bean said that she missed her students, family and her Illustration Club.

"That was the hardest thing to leave in the high school because there was just a couple kids in Illustration Club," she said. "They were going to continue the Illustration Club and they did with Ms. Carbone, who was my sub ... and the interest in Illustration Club is still strong now because of that, it didn't die ... which was a risk I took when I left."

Bean's students and members of the Illustration Club said that her absence was noted.

"It's definitely different when Ms. Bean isn't there because Ms. Bean is very passionate about illustration," said Jess Fleming, a senior and one of the presidents of the Illustration Club.

Ultimately, Bean recognized that part of being an artist, writer or musician is just "being a nerd ... and [getting] good at what you're trying to do." She said her time away was perfect for one year and there were many "happy reunions" when she returned.

Staff photo by Anar Kansara
Bean said the hardest thing to leave was her Illustration Club.

Très Petite Crêperie to bring French cuisine to Lexington Center in early 2016

■ Ethan Kleppner
Staff Writer

Lexington Center's cuisine is about to get even more diverse with Très Petite Crêperie, opening on Edison Way next to Dunkin Donuts.

Owner Aristea Souliopoulos said she is determined to bring an authentic French dining experience to Lexington. She said she hopes to support local farms, including Wilson's, Crescent Ridge, Wagon Wheel, Meadow Mist, Pete & Jen's Backyard Birds and Farmyard and Jacob Farm. The restaurant will use local farm ingredients in their crêpes.

Souliopoulos' family owns restaurant businesses in the Boston area, and she said she became interested in opening a business in Lexington Center.

"Some of my family and very best of friends live in Lexington, so I thought, what else does this town need?" Souliopoulos said. She said she hopes for Très Petite to be the first of two or three crêperies in the area.

Souliopoulos said she plans for there to be both sit-down and take-out eating experiences, with indoor and outside seating options available seasonally. Due to the difficulty of parking in the Center, her goal is to make picking up crêpes from Très Petite both convenient and efficient.

"There'll be no need to worry about finding a parking spot or deal with rainy days or puddles. We'll bring your take-out order to your car when ready," she said.

She said she plans to serve a variety of sweet and savory crêpes for lunch, dinner and dessert. Eventually, she plans on expanding to Sunday brunch. The menu will also change with seasonal and weekly specials.

Alongside the variety of crêpes and other entrees available, Souliopoulos said she hopes to bring in French snacks for customers to eat. A kids menu will be an option for families with children.

Très Petite will be open for business in early 2016, around January or February. Souliopoulos said she is eager to hire students from Lexington High School and Minuteman High School as cashiers and prep cooks.

Staff photo by Andrew Wang
Très Petit Crêperie will offer a selection of sweet and savory crêpes for sit-down and take-out.

Seventeen auditionees play in LHS Concerto Competition

■ Nikki Kim
Anelga Hajjar
Staff Writers

What initially began as a competition with only three competitors in 1987 is now entering its 28th year as the annual Lexington High School Concerto Competition. It has grown to include 17 auditionees and took place on Dec. 15.

The competition continues to provide an opportunity for students participating in a LHS performing arts ensemble to showcase their musical talents in front of a panel of judges composed of local professional musicians, according to an informational flyer. Winners then perform a movement of their concerto with either of the two auditioned LHS orchestras.

Janet Haas, an orchestra conductor and strings specialist at LHS, first initiated the competition.

"I wanted to create a more clear procedure as to how people are chosen, to make it more fair," Haas said.

Emily Ko, a sophomore at LHS, described her feelings towards being a first time auditionee.

"It's scary to go through a process that you have never experienced before. There's a lot of talented [musicians], and it's kind of nerve-racking to compete against people who could be older and have auditioned before," Ko said.

Ko described her practicing routine. "I make sure I practice almost every day but I also give myself breaks ... I listen to a lot of recordings of the movement and that helps," Ko said.

Ko has studied the cello for eight years and will be auditioning with the Concerto in C Major by Haydn.

A previous winner of the competition is Meredith Hiller, a senior. She auditioned when she was a junior.

"I am the first one to admit that I hate competition. Competing just seems so against the broader goal of music, which is to bring people together, but in this day and age, with college auditions and such, it is something every musician must get used to," Hiller said.

She chose to play the Mendelssohn violin concerto for her performance piece for this year's Concerto Concert on Nov. 5.

"Once I let that go I was able to have a lot of fun with it. I realized that all that really mattered was how I wanted to portray the piece," Hiller said.

The winners of this year's competition are: Andrew Li, piano; Hannah Ryu, violin; Richard Kuang, cello; Joshua Kim, clarinet; Natalie Ramesh, flute

Previous Concerto Competition winner Corinne Auger performs Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No. 1, Movement I

■ Catherine Cheng
A&E Editor

Staff photo by Sarah Bernstein
Corinne Auger has been playing the violin for 12 years.

On Dec. 18, Corinne Auger, a senior at Lexington High School and one of the winners of the 2014 LHS Concerto Competition, performed the first movement of the Prokofiev Violin Concerto No. 1 with the LHS Chamber Orchestra.

Auger started playing violin when she was in first grade. "My brother actually played the violin and so I wanted to be like him. We listened to a lot of music at my house and as I got older I kept doing things that got me more into it," Auger said. She is currently in her 12th year playing the violin.

Auger does more with her music than just solo. She tutors students, helps an outreach program called From the Top where she brings music to inner city school children, plays concerts at community locations, attends the New England Conservatory of Music Prep school where she sits principal second violin in the Youth Philharmonic Orchestra and plays in a quartet.

The 2014 Concerto Competition was Auger's second time auditioning; the first was as an LHS freshman. She decided to audition again in her junior year because "It's fun. It is also a good opportunity to play with an orchestra, which is something you don't generally have many chances to do. I had a piece that I thought would work well for it and was ready."

In order to prepare the Prokofiev for the audition, Auger would be sure to play the piece through from start to finish at least once per practice session .She said, "I would just play through it all the time. I was able to build up a lot of endurance."

Auger hopes to pursue music professionally. She applied to music schools and universities with music programs. "I don't know if I would want to go into performance or if I want to be doing something more along the lines of social change for music related things, something like the From the Top residences that I have been doing. I think music is fun to play, but it is also fun to listen to. It is just such a joyful thing."

Northeastern Senior District Festival to showcase 99 LHS student musicians Jan. 9

■ Brendan Cantwell
Staff Writer

On Nov. 14, 180 students from all the performing arts programs at Lexington High School attended auditions for the Northeastern Senior District Festival. Massachusetts is divided into four regions — northeastern, eastern, southeastern, and western — by the Massachusetts Music Educators Association. Each district holds a Senior Districts festival, and a Junior Districts Festival.

Students who perform exceptionally at their auditions are recommended to audition for the All-State Festival, which combines students from all four districts. Each festival offers concert band, orchestra, jazz band or chorus.

Historically, LHS has contributed many students to Senior Districts and this year is no exception. According to Jeffrey Leonard, the Director of Performing Arts for the Lexington Public Schools, a greater number of Lexington students were accepted this year than last year, when only 86 students made the festival.

The percentage of Lexington students versus other students in the festival has increased since 2008, when the MMEA removed limits on the number of students from each instrument section that a school was allowed to send to audition. Leonard said "the ability has always been here, but now the opportunity has matched that." He also said that the number of Lexington students accepted is "pretty remarkable."

Leonard said he "really [tries] hard to downplay [competition] among the students" during auditions, adding that he "want[s] them to support each other in what they do." Greg Gettel, a private trumpet teacher experienced in training kids for districts, also says that "nobody's ever let on any hard feelings" towards each other because of audition results.

On preparing students for auditions, Gettel advises them to know the requirements, such as scales, sight reading, and most importantly, the piece. He says that students should "listen to good recordings and bad recordings" to better understand the solo. He also advises them to "prepare to be nervous."

There are three rehearsals before the festival's final performance on Jan. 9. One is on Jan. 6 and the other on Jan. 8, both from 3:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. A third rehearsal is on Jan. 9 before the concert. The festival's rehearsals and concert will take place at Lowell High School, according to the Senior Districts Website.

Alexander Tung, a freshman at LHS who plays the trumpet said "One of the best ways to become a better musician is to simply play with those better than you. [The festival] is a great opportunity to play with some of the best musicians in the district, allowing one to pick up on ideas and techniques of others."

Joshua Kim, a senior at LHS, who plays the clarinet added to this, saying "meeting musicians is a unique experience."

Many students who have attended the festival in previous years are looking forward to meeting friends they have made through music. Sam Kielar, an eleventh grader at LHS, is hoping to "[meet] new kids and [make] new connections, as well as catching up with people I have met in previous years."

On Jan. 30, the Northeastern District will hold auditions for Junior Districts, a festival similar to Senior Districts except it is for seventh to ninth graders.

Senior Districts By The Numbers

3 rehearsals- Jan. 6, 8, 9
12 hours spent rehearsing
99 LHS students accepted
462 total people accepted
55% LHS students who auditioned who were accepted
22% of all groups will be made up of students from Lexington

Josiah "Sayku" White: rapper, producer, performer

■ Allie Antonevich
Staff Writer

A single spotlight lands softly on the dark stage, illuminating the microphone and its stand. The audience unifies for a deafening chant, "Sayku! Sayku!" Moments later, Josiah White walks out of the darkness and onto the stage confidently, his smile bringing the audience to their feet. It's 2022, and rapper Josiah White has finally made it.

White's story began at an age where most kids are spending their free time watching TV or playing a board game. White, however, was spending his free time in a studio, laying down tracks and writing his own lyrics. Once struggling with his introverted nature, White said that music provided a haven. Writing music has "allowed [him] to take those feelings … [and] put it in (sic) something creative," White said. Over the course of seven years, music has transformed his life and has sparked a drive for success within him.

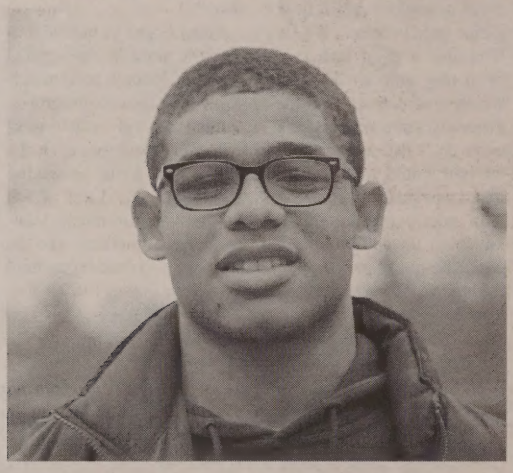
White's work, both current and past, is primarily showcased on the popular website Soundcloud, an online platform that fuels success for music artists by allowing them to upload their original work to a worldwide audience. White has uploaded both albums and singles, gaining followers and plays with each new creation. The track that he is currently most proud of is "Minuteman," a hype song created for Lexington High School's football team. The track has an impressive 2,525 plays on Soundcloud. While some of his followers are only found online, White also finds an audience eagerly awaiting new tracks here at Lexington High School.

"[The students] show me a lot of love; listening to whatever I put out," White said.

Pedro Silva, a freshman, enjoys White's music. "His rapping is really smooth and fast, but you can still understand the words," Silva said. Silva also added that this is uncommon for most rap music, and makes it more memorable. Teachers are also impressed with White's success. Dr. Kari Darling, a chemistry teacher at Lexington High School has listened to White's music. "[He is] really talented and sound[s] great," Darling said.

Living a busy life as junior and student athlete, White doesn't lose sight of his dream with the help of both mentors and role models. Rick Aggeler has been White's mentor since the very beginning, assisting him with the production of tracks and also with exposure. With Aggeler's help, White has performed at impressive venues that include Gillette Stadium, TD Garden, Berklee Performance Center, Strand Theatre, and Spotify Boston. White reveres rappers Logic and J. Cole, using their personal "self-built" success stories for motivation.

White hopes to make rap his career, eager for new experiences and is also curious to see what life would be like on the road. Josiah's lifelong dream hasn't faded over the years, it has simply become more vibrant. "It's what I want to do," White said.



Staff Photo by Chao Zheng Li
Josiah White, a junior, spends his free time writing and performing his music. He said he hopes to make rap his future career.

Social media distorts election process

■ Andrea Michelson
Editor-in-Chief

My Facebook newsfeed is dominated by posts about politics. This includes shared articles covering political debates, paragraph-long rants about certain candidates and a collection of Donald Trump memes.

This election cycle has been particularly present on social media. Though this phenomenon makes national politics accessible for anyone with a Facebook or Twitter account, it essentially has turned the 2016 Presidential Election into a popularity contest.

Success is measured in followers and likes, which can be misleading: take Donald Trump's five million Twitter followers, for example. In Trump's case, his notoriety has brought him considerable online success. His knack for producing offensive tweets has attracted followers and shockingly places him at the top of most Republican polls.

"Frankly, I think people talk about Trump so much because it's just plain fun. In terms of [Lexington High School], the vast majority of people don't support him, so he's kind of a common cause that everyone can hate," Ruth Landis, an LHS senior, said.

Most of Trump's followers keep up with his social media platform for entertainment, not to genuinely support his campaign.

But Trump's Twitter domination makes him the most recognizable Republican candidate in the race. The possibility of seeing Trump's name on the presidential ballot is becoming more likely with every tweet.

Another problem arises when voters rely solely on social media to learn about candidates and their stances on current issues. I missed the first GOP debate and checked Facebook for the highlights. My peers' posts only provided biased information and angry opinions.

"I guess it's good that they're showing their opinion. People should be careful though because you never know who's going to get offended. People get pretty heated," LHS senior Bobby Mackenzie said.

The close relationship between politics and social media allows voters to voice their opinions and encourages participation in the election process. But we are also faced with the ongoing issue of superficial social media.

At face value, Hillary Clinton is a tired old woman attempting to appeal to millennials. Bernie Sanders is an unapologetic socialist. Carly Fiorina is a Republican posing as a feminist. And Donald Trump is a frank but misguided millionaire.

There is some truth behind these claims, but what truly matters as the election season nears are the issues that these candidates support. When one of these men or women wins the election and takes office, stances on foreign policy and gun control will matter much more than who was most favorably tweeted about during a debate.

New online deadline policy intends to promote healthy habits

■ Dabin Kang
Allen Cui
Staff Writers

Slumped on desks, slouched in chairs, yawning in class—are students really to blame? What is responsible for students' lack of sleep at Lexington High School?

The school has recently changed their policy regarding online homework deadlines from midnight to 9 p.m. This change reflects the administration's efforts to lessen stress among students and encourage them to get more sleep.

"We had a lot of concerns from students and parents that … kids were up late trying to get this work completed by midnight," Associate Principal John Murray said. "[We] worry about the message sent to kids … that if something is due at midnight, then the school's expectations should be to work until midnight."

So far, there have been mixed reviews from the student body itself.

"I truthfully believe that [the 12 a.m. deadline] encourages us high schoolers to stay up later," William Sherwood, a junior, said. "This time change is for the best; it makes us follow a schedule that will be for the better."

While some may look at the 9 p.m. deadline as an opportunity for growth and development, others may see it as an unfair adjustment that restricts the time they have to work on assignments. For students with hectic after-school schedules, the deadline is rather inconvenient.

"I don't really like the new Turnitin deadline change since I usually do my homework later at night," Andrew Li, a sophomore, said. "It's not fun when you get back home at 8:30 p.m. and realize that you have to submit your paper in 30 minutes."

Some students said they believe that they may still be faced with the everlasting issue of sleep and stress.

"I think it actually adds stress to a lot of students since you lose three hours. You end up rushing and put other subjects off until later. As a result, you're not giving the best effort and you become even more stressed about your grades ... It's both a restrictive and invasive policy," Leandena Dankese, a junior, said.

New information about the importance of sleep is rising to the surface and many schools are using this data for the benefit of the students, according to Tammy Darling, a psychology teacher.

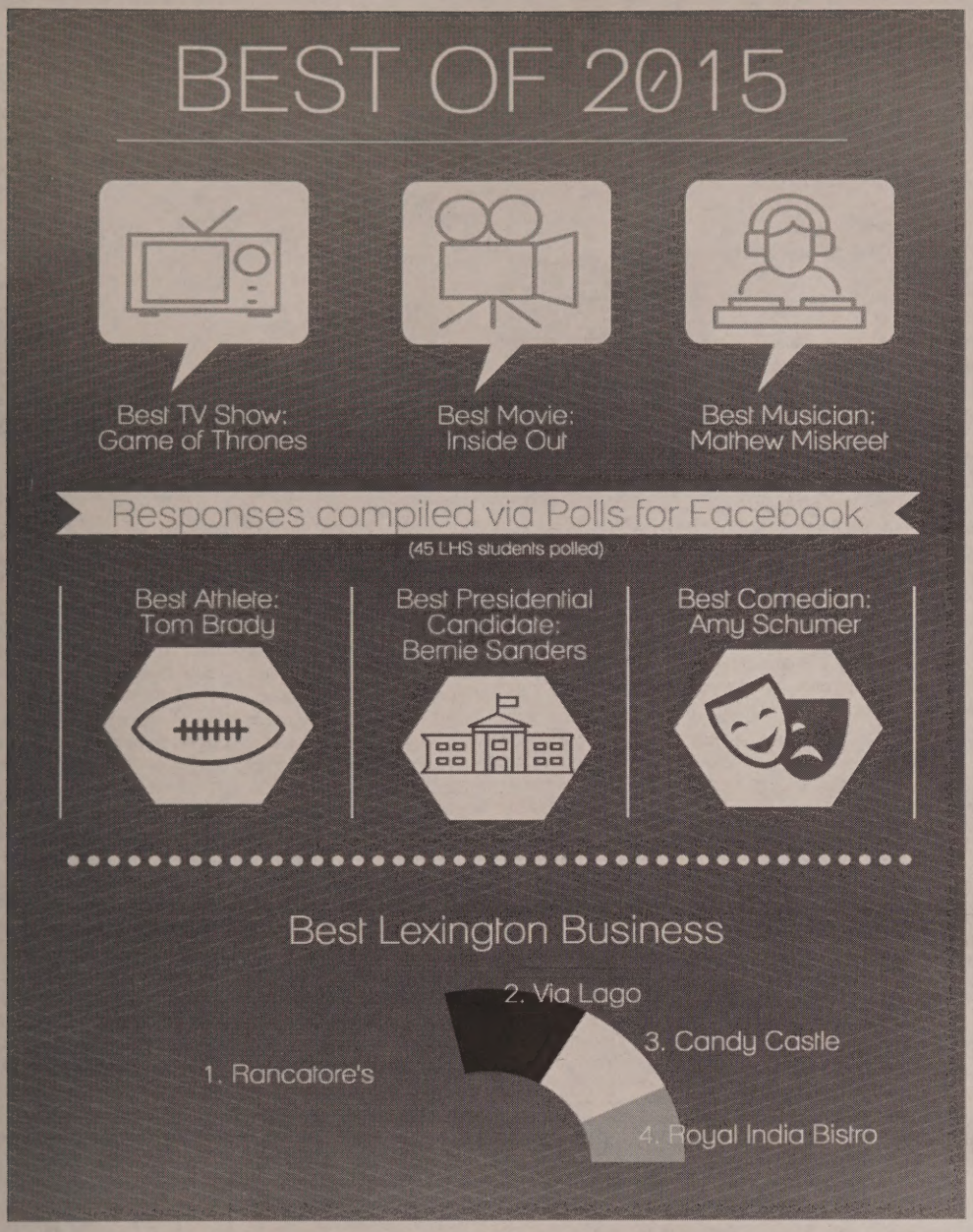
"I think a part of these sleep habits that may be poor are still positively reinforced," Darling said. "Student figures [say] 'This works for me because it's worked in the past. Why challenge it?'"

Darling said the amount of sleep teens in high school should get per night ranges from around seven to nine hours, yet the competitive environment of LHS contributes to students going to bed later than they normally should.

"We're in this workaholic society, you know. It's hard. It's like a one-upmanship. 'Oh yeah, you only got two hours? Well I only had 45 minutes.' It's this emphasis and focus on 'Well, I'm working harder.' And this comparison really contributes to habits that appear to be more complex," Darling said.

As students continue to develop a cognitive pattern of studying, and also face the pressure to participate in extracurriculars, the policy change is one that continues to gather mixed reactions from students depending on the lifestyle they choose.

"There are a lot of culture shifts we're trying to make here … and it's going to be slow … we don't want to stop doing well, we just want to do it in a healthy manner," Murray said.



2015: An overview

This was the year that Taylor Swift launched her 1989 world tour, solidified the status of her #squad through a music video and racked up an armful of awards in the process.

It was the year the Presidential candidates - every last one of them - pulled out their relatable-yet-authoritative smiles, smoothed out their red and blue suits and ties and hit the campaign trail.

This was the year we said goodbye to beloved TV shows such as "Parks and Recreation", "Mad Men", "Two and a Half Men" and "Parenthood", according to CinemaBlend.com.

This was a year of impactful changes. Same-sex marriage was ruled legal by the US Supreme Court and President Barack Obama's administration prioritized educational reform.

To wrap up this calendar year, The Musket polled students via Facebook about their favorite local and pop-culture-related keystones of 2015.

Poll responses complied by Max Saltman via Polls for Facebook. Inforgaphic created by Andrea Michelson via Piktochart. Introduction by Valerie Hsieh.

'The Martian' features intelligent characters and strong special effects

Austin Rossi
Columnist

The Martian
PG-13, 144 minutes, adventure/drama/sci-fi
Directed by: Ridley Scott
Starring: Matt Damon, Jessica Chastain, Jeff Daniels

"The Martian" is the latest film from Ridley Scott and is based on the novel of the same name. It follows the story of Mark Watney, an astronaut who is mistakenly left behind on the Red Planet after a Mars mission goes wrong. The majority of the film shows two parallel plotlines: Mark Watney's attempts to survive 250 million miles from Earth, and NASA's urgent mission to find a way to bring him home safely. "The Martian" felt like an almost spiritual successor to 2013's "Gravity", which featured a similar space-survival scenario.

In contrast to "Gravity", "The Martian" shows not only the astronaut's experience but also what's going on back on Earth. What I really liked about this film was that I was equally engaged in both the Mars and Earth storylines.

On Mars, Matt Damon brings a certain intelligence and charisma that perfectly suits the role of his character. He convinces us that he is smart enough to actually be coming up with these different survival mechanisms, while also cracking jokes to keep the audience entertained. In fact, this movie actually ended up being a lot funnier than I would have expected a sci-fi thriller to be, yet none of the humor feels forced or out-of-place.

On Earth, it was a lot of fun to watch members of NASA strategize and debate about the best way to bring Watney home as well as how to handle the media. These sections of the film could have potentially felt boring and drawn out, but they are brilliantly done and I found them almost equally as exciting as Watney's survival sequences on Mars. Some notable performances among the people on Earth include that of Jeff Daniels (who happened to be in "Steve Jobs" as well), whose character is at the helm of the mission to save Watney, and Sean Bean, who plays the consultant for the crew of astronauts who unknowingly left Watney behind.

If you haven't seen the full trailer for "The Martian", don't watch it! The trailer alone gives away so much of the movie that I felt I already had a good idea about where the film was going before I even stepped into the theater. Unfortunately a lot of production companies today feel that they need to show us the entire movie just to convince us to buy a ticket, and as a result, a lot of major plot points are spoiled.

With that aside, "The Martian" provided for a fantastic time at the movies and was a whole lot of fun. The special effects were consistently breathtaking, and although some of the action sequences did not have as much buildup and tension as I would have preferred, I still enjoyed every minute of this film.

My rating: A

Cheerleaders and football players work toward mutual appreciation

Caitlin Deschner
Eunice Kim
Staff Writers

In a long-standing Lexington High School tradition, cheerleaders are paired with football players during the fall sports season in order to build mutual support and team spirit.

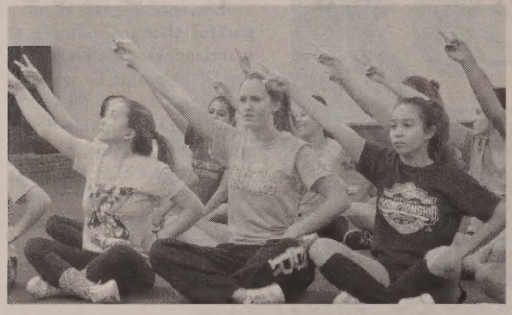
Senior athletes from these sports are paired for the purpose of making spirit posters and inserting football players' names into game cheers.

Cheerleading often gets a bad rap for perpetuating gender inequality, but the fact that many athletes choose to participate for the spirit and unique social aspect is often overlooked.

"For a lot of people, [cheerleading] is something that's really fun and sociable," said athletic director Naomi Martin.

The pairing of cheerleaders and football players is a common practice among high schools in the United States. Its purpose is to build support between the teams and to create an atmosphere of appreciation.

Regulations of team bonding activities can go against the spirit of the institution. Some people, though not those at LHS, have expressed concerns regarding the limited appreciation of cheerleaders, which appears to be less than the support football players receive. Even though this comparison is not as evident at LHS as at other high schools throughout the country, further appreciation and recognition of cheerleaders is a highly debated issue.



Staff Photo by Attiya Nurse

Lexington High School cheerleaders practice a routine. This year, new rules have been implemented to promote reciprocated support between the cheerleading and football teams.

Staff Photo by Eunice Kim

Cheerleaders who are paired with football players often make spirit posters and baked goods as a sign of support and appreciation.

"The cheerleaders probably give more," Dennis Bromley, an LHS senior and football player, said.

During the season, "[the football players] go to [the cheerleaders'] competitions, whenever they have it, but obviously the cheerleaders come to all our games," Bromley said.

This tradition has built support and respect between the cheerleading and football teams, but this year, the athletic department made some changes to ensure equal treatment. Though this is clearly a cause for celebration, it is a belated progression in our Lexington community.

This is the first year that new rules were finally implemented and old rules were reinforced. These new adjustments have helped provide more equal opportunities for athletes, including more team bonding and support.

In years prior, football players had the option of attending cheerleading competitions. This year, all players are required to attend the competitions.

In addition, cheerleaders are no longer allowed to bake for football players unless they get something in return.

"In previous years, the football players didn't really care and we would just bake goods … but this year, we tried to make them acknowledge that we're here too," Michelle Moesner, an LHS senior and cheerleading co-captain, said.

This existing policy was formally implemented by the cheerleading coaches, who observed that the sweets exchange was not reciprocal. In previous years, giving baked goods had been an ongoing tradition, even though the rule already existed. Cheerleaders would bring cookies to their football counterparts as a gesture of support, without expecting reciprocation for their time and effort.

"I think we've come to a really good place where [the cheerleaders] are recognized alongside the football players on senior day and the football players are supporting them and their competitions," Martin said.

Some cheerleaders agree.

"This year, the football team got involved more than any other year in the past," Zofia Bianchi, an LHS junior and cheerleader, said.

Q&A: Sheehan discusses 18 years of teaching at LHS

Lizzie Case
Staff Writer

Q: How long have you been teaching at LHS? What have you taught?
A: I have been teaching at LHS since 1998. I started teaching part-time along with my duties as the Head Athletic Trainer and eventually became a full time Physical Education Teacher. In 2008 I was appointed K-12 PE, Health and Wellness Coordinator.

Q: What is your favorite aspect of being a teacher? The most rewarding and most challenging?
A: I always like interacting with our LHS students - making a connection and hopefully teaching them some applicable life skills.

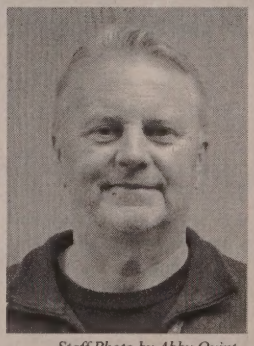
Q: What is a trick or skill you have developed through your career teaching high schoolers?
A: Probably my deadpan sense of humor, which is meant to put students at ease in my class, but I'm sure sometimes they wonder what they got themselves into!

Q: If you weren't going to be a teacher, what other career would you or have you considered?
A: As I did take a career diversion into carpentry and music at one point in my life, I would probably still follow that path if I was not in education.

Q: How has being an athletic trainer influenced your career and personal outlook in life?
A: As an athletic trainer, I get to interact with student athletes on a more personal level as it is a team approach to getting the athlete healthy enough to participate with their team. It is important to develop a sense of trust and connection with the athlete and get them to understand that my role is to make sure they are healthy enough to return, not to stop them from playing.

Q: What was the most rewarding moment with your teams?
A: It is always a rewarding experience to know that a student athlete has worked hard with the Athletic Training staff to recover from their injury and can fully participate with their team again.

Q: What makes LHS different from other schools in your opinion?
A: I believe the commitment and willingness of both staff and students to work collaboratively and the tremendous support that the school system in general receives from the Lexington community allow students the opportunity to explore and pursue many of their interests and passions. The diversity of academic courses, clubs, after school activities and athletic teams contribute to the variety of opportunities available to students in LHS.



Staff Photo by Abby Quint

Q: Do you coach any sports?
A: No I do not coach, I am the Head Athletic Trainer at LHS and my primary responsibility in that role is as an allied healthcare professional who is responsible for the prevention assessment, treatment and rehabilitation of sports injuries for all of the after school sports programs.

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• Heike Arendt

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